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ABSTRACT

A 21 minute sound color film was produced in an attempt to help teachers and educational specialists see people like themselves helping youngsters become more task oriented by the use of operant conditioning and modeling procedures formulated by Skinner (1953) and Bandura (1964). The unstructured and unrehearsed film consists of edited film records, over time, of behavior modification techniques in three settings, constrasting pupil behavior before and after introduction of modification techniques. It also details methods for training teachers in the use of operant conditioning techniques, and specifies the role of the school psychologist in the introduction and evaluation of behavior modification methods. Evaluation of the film's effectiveness, performed with 21 elementary school teachers using an after only test design, verified the success of the film both in conveying information about procedures and in favorably influencing people's attitudes toward these procedures. A sample teacher information level questionnaire is appended. (Author/CJ)

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BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION IN THE CLASSROOM

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FINAL REPORT

Project No. 8-1-022

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PRODUCTION AND EVALUATION OF A FILM ABOUT BEHAVIOR TECHNIQUES TO INCREASE TASK ORIENTED BEHAVIOR

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PRODUCTION AND EVALUATION OF A FILM ABOUT BEHAVIORAL TECHNIQUES TO INCREASE TASK ORIENTED BEHAVIOR

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June, 1970

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CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Goals of the Film 2

Goals of the Evaluation 3

Results: The Film 4

Results: The Evaluation 5

Results: Method 5

Information Gain 6

Attitude Change 7

Opinion of the Film 8

Discussion of Findings 8

Bibliography 10

Appendix A: Experimental Questionnaire 11

Appendix B: Control Questionnaire 20

Introduction

The psychological principles of operant conditioning and modelling have constituted a principle source of research in cognition, learning, and education for the last decade. Indeed, operant conditioning principles have diffused from the technical vocabulary of the psychological and educational researcher into common language. There have been an innumerable number of attempts to use principles of operant conditioning in the development of curricula and materials for education but until relatively recently not much attention was spent on the possibilities of using this method as a means of increasing task-oriented behavior in the classroom. The problem, quite simply, is in the engineering of what has been called "deutero-learning", i.e. learning how to learn, by means of operant conditioning techniques.

In 1965-66 a study was done by Stewart Nixon entitled "Ways by Which Overly Active Students Can Be Taught to Concentrate on Study Activities". (Small Contract Project #S-379) During the course of that investigation some of the experimental procedures were recorded on 8mm film. The film materials which were generated in the course of the experiment evinced considerable interest from many professionals in the fields of education, counseling, and psychology, as well as other fields.

As a result of that experience which clearly indicated the need and interest in a film which would explain various techniques of classroom behavior control, Stewart Nixon, Ph.D, Supervising Clinical Psychologist, Santa Clara County Mental Health approached the Department of Communication, Stanford University about the possibility of producing a 16mm color sound film which would explicate techniques of using operant conditioning for classroom behavior modification. Application was made to the U.S. Office of Education which resulted in the funding of O.E. Project No. 8-1-022 entitled "Production and Evaluation of a Film About Behavioral Techniques to Increase Task Oriented Behavior".

An important component of the grant proposal was the evaluation of the effectiveness of the film in terms of its goals, both during

production and after production. The film was directed by Christopher Tillam under the supervision of Henry Breitrose, Ph.D, Associate Professor of Communication at Stanford, with the invaluable cooperation and advice of Stewart B. Nixon, Ph.D. The evaluation during production was by Messrs. Nixon, Tillam, and Breitrose, and the post-production design and testing was done by Peter Lederman, graduate student in the Institute for Communication Research at Stanford with the assistance and advice of the Institute staff.

Goals of the Film

At the outset it was decided that the film should be of utility to several possible audiences and as a result an informal hierarchy of goals was established. Primarily the film was for teachers, either in pre-service or in-service training. It was to be an instructional film that would serve to inform, to shape attitudes, and to increase relevant information seeking behavior. It was agreed that samples of behavior control methods from very young, intermediate, and older grades should be demonstrated, indicating that the techniques were applicable at various levels in the primary educational pattern. It was decided that a number of teachers would be shown using these methods, ranging from experienced older teachers to relative neophytes.

Another very important consideration in designing the film was demonstrating methods for teachers to learn to use behavior control through role modelling, and the advantages of close cooperation between the teacher and the school psychologist in the utilization of behavior modification techniques in the classroom.

Another initial consideration was that the film should be of utility to lay boards of education in their concerns with the introduction of behavior modification as an innovative technique in the school. As a result of this consideration it was determined that the language in the film should be, as far as possible, non-technical, and that the presentation should be, as far as possible, practical.

Finally, it was assumed that schools initiating behavior modification programs in the classroom would be faced with the problem of

communicating the technique and expected outcomes to parents of school children. The consultant and principal investigator were both aware of some of the possible objections on the part of some people to the use ofoperant conditioning techniques. Certainly, it would be naive not to recognize that the notions of behavior control and behavior modification carry with them a fair amount of negative affect which was believed to be a result of mis-information, and lack of information. The two major misconceptions which the film was designed to counter at that level were that operant conditioning techniques were mysterious psychological manipulations and that reinforcement was a kind of bribery. Great pains were taken in the construction of the film to deal with these kinds of misconceptions.

Goals of the Evaluation

The classic mode of production of factual films has been to construct the film on the basis of intuitive assumptions about content and audience, examination of relevant written material such as syllabi and texts, and advice from content authorities, committees, et al. Only relatively recently has the criterion of validation become of interest to the factual film maker and to the user of educational films. Briefly stated, validation is the assessment of the degree to which the film accomplishes the goals set forth by those who made it. In general the difficulty in validation studies is precisely that of articulating the goals in something approaching an explicit manner. Certainly any communication may have a multitude of long-term and short-term effects at affective, cognitive, and gross behavioral levels, and much of the artistry in the design of communications is concerned with maximizing the number, quality, and interactions of effects. While this may be interesting and laudable in the realm of art for art's sake, the factual film maker and especially the educational film maker must perforce be concerned with a more specific set of goals. Put in more technical language, our concern was with evaluation of intentional rather than incidental effects. In order to maximize the intentional effects of the film a number of teachers and students in education viewed the film at various stages during its production and were interviewed in order to get some specific notions of clarity, rate of presentation, redundancy, and order of presentation within the film as it would effect the prime audience. Innumerable changes were

made until ultimately the construction of the film was frozen using the criterion of the production team having done as much as was possible considering the circumstances of time and money available. If the film were to be successful in terms of the goals of the project team the following hypotheses would have to be supported by a test audience composed of teachers:

H_1 Teachers who saw the film should know more about behavior modification techniques than a comparable group of teachers who had not seen the film.

H_2 Teachers who saw the film should have a more favorable attitude toward behavior modification than a comparable group of teachers who had not seen the film.

Results

The Film:

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION IN THE CLASSROOM is a 21 minute sound color film which details techniques of applied operant conditioning techniques in the classroom setting at an early, intermediate and older grade level in primary school. It is distributed, at cost, by the Educational Media Center, University of California, Berkeley.

The action in the film is entirely unrehearsed and unstructured by the film maker. It consists of edited film records, over time, of behavior modification techniques in three distinct settings, contrasting pupil behavior before and after the introduction of behavior modification techniques, as well as specifying the need for determining appropriate rewards and generalizing reward from specific tangible objects to verbal and non-verbal reinforcement. In addition it details methods for training teachers in the use of operant conditioning techniques by means of role modelling procedures, and specifies the role of the school psychologist and/or psychological consultant in the introduction and evaluation of behavior modification methods.

The Evaluation

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION IN THE CLASSROOM was produced so that the teacher and educational specialist would have an opportunity to see people like themselves, helping youngsters become more task-oriented by the use of operant conditioning and modeling procedures formulated by Skinner (1953) and Bandura (1964) respectively.

METHOD

Subjects

Twenty-one elementary school teachers from public and parochial schools in the cities of San Jose and Palo Alto, California. Tests were administered at faculty meetings.

Variables

The independent (stimulus) variable was a 21 minute 16mm color film entitled BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION IN THE CLASSROOM. The film illustrates the principles and techniques of behavior modification by demonstrating their successful application in three different classroom situations. All three demonstrations result in an increase in the pupil's task-oriented behavior.

The dependent variable was a 32 item questionnaire designed to measure the effectiveness of the film in three areas:

1. in increasing the viewer's information on the subject
2. in favorably influencing his attitude
3. in presenting an interesting and realistic visual guide

The information gain section consisted of 14 true-false and multiple choice questions. The attitude change section asked the respondent to indicate the extent of his agreement or disagreement on 5 point scales to a set of seven statements based on the film. The final section was aimed at gauging the viewer's direct opinion of the film itself. The questions tried to elicit responses in the following three areas:

1. was the film realistic
2. did it increase your understanding
3. were there any additions you would have liked to see?

To judge whether the film was realistic, the subjects were asked to first estimate the degree of difficulty the teachers in the film seemed to have in instituting the program, and then to estimate the degree of difficulty they themselves would expect. The estimations were reported on 5 point scales, each one, ranging from "extreme ease" to "extreme difficulty".

The two questions on understanding used 5 point scales where the response could range from "increased it a great deal" to "decreased it a great deal".

The final questions on additions to the film asked for simple yes-no responses to suggested additions plus space where the subject could add general comments. The questionnaire was pretested on 12 elementary school teachers from Menlo Park and Mountain View, California.

Procedure

The experiment employed an after-only design (Campbell and Stanley 1963) to eliminate the possibility of test-retest interaction. The subjects were randomly assigned to the control group (N-9) and experimental group (N-12). The subjects watched the film as part of their regular faculty meetings.

Results of the pre-test questionnaire were stable to the extent that it was appropriate to include the pre-test group in the experimental design. The pre-test was administered in exactly the same manner as subsequent manipulations, i.e., dividing subjects randomly into two groups and comparing pre-test scores of the control group with pre-test scores of the experimental group.

FINDINGS

Information Gain

Subjects could score a total of 14 correct on the multiple choice and true-false questions. The control group had a mean of 7.7 and a standard deviation of 2.36. The experimental group had a mean of 12.5 and a standard deviation of 1.26. The mean difference was significant and in the desired direction with a T test score of 5.52, at df=19, and $p<.01$ two-tailed.

Information

	Control	Experimental
Mean	7.7(a)	12.5(a)
Standard Deviation	2.36	1.36

a) of a possible 14
b) $p<.01$ in desired direction

Attitude Change

Subjects were accorded 5 points for checking the most favorable response on the 5 point scales and 1 point for the least favorable. Thus for seven statements the possible range for an individual subject was from 7 to 35. The control group had a mean of 25.0 and a standard deviation of 3.62. The experimental group had a mean of 30.6 and a standard deviation of 3.01. The mean difference was again significant and in the desired direction with a T test score of 3.78, at df=19, and $p<.01$ two-tailed.

Attitude Change

	Control	Experimental
Mean	25.0(a)	30.6(a)
Standard Deviation	3.62	3.01

a) of a possible 35
b) $p<.01$ in desired direction

Opinion of Film

The subjects' estimation of the degree of difficulty that the teachers in the film had in instituting the program had a mean of 4.2 out of a possible 5, with 5 being the pole of extreme ease. The subjects' estimation of their own expected degree of difficulty was an identical 4.2. The questionnaire then broke down the second estimation trying to pinpoint the source of expected difficulty, i.e. the child in the program, the other children in the class, parents, or the administration. There were no significant differences between the film's presentation and the subjects' own estimations. There were negative fractional discrepancies (subjects expecting more difficulty) in the two categories of "difficulty from the child in the program", and "difficulty from the other children in the class".

The same 67% of the subjects indicated that they would have liked to see additions to the film in all the four suggested areas: increased theoretical explanations, more demonstrations, parental interviews, and interviews with the children.

The general comment space was used in only 50% of the cases and the comments were extremely generalized. Favorable remarks outnumbered unfavorable remarks by 5 to 1.

Discussion

The experimental evaluation verified the film's success both in conveying information about the procedures of behavior modification and in favorably influencing people's attitudes towards these procedures. Mean comparisons were significant and in the direction of increased information and favorable attitude, illustrating that the film acheived its objectives.

It is interesting to note that in both the information gain and attitude change results, the standard deviation was smaller in the experimental group. This indicates that there was less variability in the scoring and that the subjects were probably drawing on a more unified and consistent source of information: the film.

The more direct, but probably less reliable, indication of the film's success was the respondents' opinions in section three. Since the estimation of the teachers' difficulty in the film was exactly matched by the respondents' estimation of their own expected difficulty, and both estimations were close to the "extreme ease" end of the scale, one could say that the film's exposition was both realistic and appealing.

That two thirds of the respondents indicated that they would have liked the film to contain more theory, demonstrations and interviews although the means on the understanding scales was very high, shows that there is room for more detailed and complex films in this area.

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APPENDIX A

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION STUDY

The following questionnaire was designed to help estimate the level of information that teachers possess on the principles and techniques of behavior modification and their attitudes towards these principles and techniques.

The first section includes both True and False and multiple choice questions. Please indicate your response to the True and False questions by placing an X beside the word True if you believe the statement is true, or next to the word False if you believe the statement is false.

Please indicate your response to the multiple choice questions by circling the letter preceeding the phrase that you believe best completes the statement. If the question indicates that more than one answer may be correct, please circle one or more of the corresponding letters.

Section I

Answer the following question by indicating whether the statements are True or False.

1. Giving either positive attention (e.g. compliments) or negative attention (e.g. reprimands) to disruptive behavior may serve to reward or encourage that behavior.

   True _____ False _____

2. Focusing attention on inattentive behavior that is non-disruptive (e.g. daydreaming) may serve to reward that behavior.

   True _____ False _____

3. An inattentive child usually receives less attention from the teacher than an attentive child.

   True _____ False _____

4. The rest of the class should not be briefed on the teacher's use of behavior modification techniques on a particular pupil.

   True _____ False _____

5. Behavior modification turns the teacher's attention from appropriate to inappropriate behavior.

   True _____ False _____

6. Behavior modification techniques will only be successful when applied to one or, possibly, two members of a class at one time.

   True _____ False _____

7. The behavior modification program should be coordinated with the principal and school psychologist.

   True _____ False _____

Answer questions 8-11B by circling the letter in front of the one phrase that best completes the statement. These questions relate to procedures the teacher should use when <u>first</u> introducing a program of behavior modification.

8. When first introducing a behavior modification program the teacher should:

   a) reward the child for any approximation of appropriate behavior
   b) reward the child only after his first complete display of the appropriate behavior
   c) reward the child only after the appropriate behavior has been repeated enough times so that it appears well learned
   d) none of the above

9. Initially, reward should consist of:

   a) verbal praise
   b) concrete forms of reward such as candy and a pat on the back
   c) both of the above
   d) none of the above

10. Initially, the teacher should respond to minor degrees of inappropriate behavior by:

   a) giving negative attention
   b) withholding rewards earned for appropriate behavior
   c) ignoring them
   d) demonstrating appropriate behavior
   e) none of the above

11A. Initially, if a child's behavior is extremely inappropriate, the child should:

   a) be sent to another teacher's room
   b) be made to sit in front of his own class
   c) be placed in an empty room
   d) lose whatever concrete rewards he has earned
   e) none of the above

*(Answer question 11B only if you chose a,b,c, or d in question 11A)

11B. If the punishment for inappropriate behavior is decided on by the teacher, its aim should be to:

   a) separate the child from his classmates
   b) let him observe other children's behavior
   c) make him want to regain the opportunity to earn rewards
   d) hold up his behavior for negative attention
   e) none of the above

12. At later stages in the behavior modification program the teacher may: (Please circle the letter(s) before the correct answer(s) below)

a) reward the child less frequently
b) phase out concrete rewards
c) begin to use negative attention
d) design rewards that relate to the child's interests
e) allow the child small amounts of inappropriate behavior
f) explain to the child the methods of modification you are using
g) none of the above

On the next page is a series of statements expressing certain viewpoints. Following each statement is a 5 point rating scale. These scales are designed to determine the nature and strength of your attitudes on each of these statements.

The scales you will be using are simply a series of spaces ranging between two extremes on some viewpoint. The following is an example of a scale on which you are to mark the extent of your agreement with a certain statement:

strongly agree ___ ___ ___ X ___ strongly disagree
0

Which side of the center you chose to mark indicates whether you agree or disagree with the statement. How far towards the ends of the scale you mark indicates how strongly you agree or disagree.

Section 2

Please estimate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

13. Behavior modification procedures are useful in increasing task oriented behavior.

strongly agree ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ strongly disagree
0

14. The principles of behavior modification should be subjected to further testing before they are applied in the classroom.

strongly agree ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ strongly disagree
0

15. Behavior modification places too much emphasis on rewards.

strongly agree ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ strongly disagree
0

16. If a teacher spends a substantial portion of her time trying to increase the attention span of her students, then she should use the most effective means available of modifying behavior.

strongly agree ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ strongly disagree
0

17. Rewarding attentive behavior is more satisfying to a teacher than correcting inattentive behavior.

strongly agree ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ strongly disagree
0

18. Behavior modification techniques will find increased use within the school system.

strongly agree ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ strongly disagree
0

19. I would use behavior modification technique in my own class.

strongly agree ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ strongly disagree
0

The final section of the questionnaire relates to the film you have just seen. Your responses will be helpful in determining the future uses of the film. Two types of scales are used in this part along with some simple Yes and No answers. Space is also provided for general comments.

The first scale asks that you estimate a degree of difficulty:

extreme ease ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ extreme difficulty
0

The centerpoint here represents an ambivalent position where you do not believe that you can classify your response on either the easy or difficult sides.

The second type of scale tries to measure the film's effect on your understanding:

increased it a great deal ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ decreased it a great deal
0

The zero point here indicates no change.

The Yes and No questions ask that you indicate your response by placing an X beside the word Yes or beside the word No.

The final question asks for your general comments and if you need more space please use the back of the last page.

Thank you very much for your effort and assistance.

Section 3

Please answer questions 20-25 by estimating the degree of difficulty needed to complete the action described in the question. Place an X on the scale over the position that corresponds to your answer.

20. Estimate the amount of difficulty the teachers in the film seemed to encounter in implementing the behavior modification program.

extreme ease ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ extreme difficulty
0

21. Estimate the amount of difficulty you would anticipate in implementing a behavior modification program in the classroom.

extreme ease ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ extreme difficulty
0

22. Estimate the amount of difficulty you would anticipate from the <u>inattentive</u> child when applying a behavior modification program.

extreme ease ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ extreme difficulty
0

23. Estimate the amount of difficulty you would anticipate from the <u>other children in the classroom</u> when applying a behavior modification program.

extreme ease ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ extreme difficulty
0

24. Estimate the amount of difficulty you would anticipate from the inattentive child's parents when applying a behavior modification program.

extreme ease ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ extreme difficulty
0

25. Estimate the amount of difficulty you would anticipate from the <u>school's administration</u> when applying a behavior modification program.

extreme ease ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ extreme difficulty
0

26. Please estimate the extent to which the film affected your understanding of the <u>principles</u> of behavior modification.

increased it a great deal ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ decreased it a great deal
0

27. Please estimate the extent to which the film affected your understanding of the <u>techniques</u> involved in implementing a behavior modification program.

increased it a great deal ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ decreased it a great deal
0

28. Would you have liked the film to include more theoretical explanations?

Yes____ No ____

29. Would you have liked the film to include more demonstrations of behavior modification techniques?

Yes ____ No ____

30. Would you have liked the film to include interviews with parents?

Yes ____ No ____

31. Would you have liked the film to include interviews with the students?

Yes ____ No ____

32. General Comments:

APPENDIX B

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION STUDY

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The first section includes both True and False and multiple choice questions. Please indicate your response to the True and False questions by placing an X beside the word True if you believe the statement is true, or next to the word False if you believe the statement is false.

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   True _____ False _____

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   True _____ False _____

4. The rest of the class should not be briefed on the teacher's use of behavior modification techniques on a particular pupil.

   True _____ False _____

5. Behavior modification turns the teacher's attention from appropriate to inappropriate behavior.

   True _____ False _____

6. Behavior modification techniques will only be successful when applied to one or, possibly, two members of a class at one time.

   True _____ False _____

7. The behavior modification program should be coordinated with the principal and school psychologist.

   True _____ False _____

Answer questions 8-11B by circling the letter in front of the one phrase that best completes the statement. These questions relate to procedures the teacher should use when <u>first</u> introducing a program of behavior modification.

8. When first introducing a behavior modification program the teacher should:

   a) reward the child for any approximation of appropriate behavior
   b) reward the child only after his first complete display of the appropriate behavior
   c) reward the child only after the appropriate behavior has been repeated enough times so that it appears well learned
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9. Initially, reward should consist of:

   a) verbal praise
   b) concrete forms of reward such as candy and a pat on the back
   c) both of the above
   d) none of the above

10. Initially, the teacher should respond to minor degrees of inappropriate behavior by:

   a) giving negative attention
   b) withholding rewards earned for appropriate behavior
   c) ignoring them
   d) demonstrating appropriate behavior
   e) none of the above

11A. Initially, if a child's behavior is extremely inappropriate, the child should:

   a) be sent to another teacher's room
   b) be made to sit in front of his own class
   c) be placed in an empty room
   d) lose whatever concrete rewards he has earned
   e) none of the above

*(Answer question 11B only if you chose a,b,c, or d in question 11A)

11B. If the punishment for inappropriate behavior is decided on by the teacher, its aim should be to:

   a) separate the child from his classmates
   b) let him observe other children's behavior
   c) make him want to regain the opportunity to earn rewards
   d) hold up his behavior for negative attention
   e) none of the above

12. At later stages in the behavior modification program the teacher may: (Please circle the letter(s) before the correct answer(s) below)

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c) begin to use negative attention
d) design rewards that relate to the child's interests
e) allow the child small amounts of inappropriate behavior
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On the next page is a series of statements expressing certain viewpoints. Following each statement is a 5 point rating scale. These scales are designed to determine the nature and strength of your attitudes on each of these statements.

The scales you will be using are simply a series of spaces ranging between two extremes on some viewpoint. The following is an example of a scale on which you are to mark the extent of your agreement with a certain statement:

strongly agree ___ ___ ___ X ___ strongly disagree

5 0

Which side of the center you chose to mark indicates whether you agree or disagree with the statement. How far towards the ends of the scale you mark indicates how strongly you agree or disagree.

Section 2

Please estimate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

13. Behavior modification procedures are useful in increasing task oriented behavior.

strongly agree ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ strongly disagree
0

14. The principles of behavior modification should be subjected to further testing before they are applied in the classroom.

strongly agree ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ strongly disagree
0

15. Behavior modification places too much emphasis on rewards.

strongly agree ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ strongly disagree
0

16. If a teacher spends a substantial portion of her time trying to increase the attention span of her students, then she should use the most effective means available of modifying behavior.

strongly agree ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ strongly disagree
0

17. Rewarding attentive behavior is more satisfying to a teacher than correcting inattentive behavior.

strongly agree ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ strongly disagree
0

18. Behavior modification techniques will find increased use within the school system.

strongly agree ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ strongly disagree
0

19. I would use behavior modification technique in my own class.

strongly agree ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ strongly disagree
0